



## Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

October 8, 2009

Re: House Bills 4787-9

Members of the Senate Education Committee:

On behalf of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and our 3,000 members, we have evaluated the 'failing schools' and 'turnaround schools' legislation, House Bills (HBs) 4787, 4788 and 4789, and compared it to our *Consensus Principles for Education*, as well as past positions. While considering this legislation, you have an opportunity make bold, comprehensive improvements to Michigan's education system and we applaud your efforts. We encourage the development of legislation such as HB 4787, 4788 & 4789, which the Chamber supports, and urge your continued efforts to improve the education system in Michigan. We provide the following explanation:

The Chamber's Education & Workforce Development Committee drafted the *Consensus Principles for Education* which serves as our education policy outline. To summarize the responsibility of communities it states:

- The lack of equal access to a quality education based on socioeconomic status, lack of parental involvement and the expectation that government will find a solution has attributed to the acceptance of status quo.

To summarize the responsibilities of educators and schools it states:

- In order to deliver the best education possible, schools must emphasize leadership structures appropriately designed to individual school districts and remove reliance on system structures for decision making.

The *Consensus Principles for Education* also state that under the responsibilities of government in the education system:

- Government should provide flexibility in allowing innovations for alternative delivery systems by supporting schools of choice, collaboration and valuing performance in education and training.

*Connect. Grow.*  
**Succeed!**

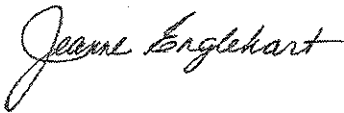
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Undeniably, flexibility is also provided through the expansion of charter schools by the school district.

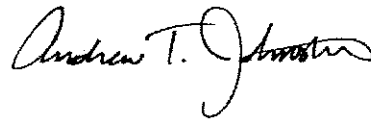
Challenging the basic assumptions about education and curriculum delivery is necessary if the problems are to be solved. We more importantly, view this as an ideal time to encourage your support of innovative ideas and bold legislation on school reform. The 'failing schools' and 'turnaround schools' legislation is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for reviewing our principles on these important issues. We encourage you to keep our thoughts and the concerns of others in mind, during your comprehensive review of this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 616.771.0300 in the future, if we can ever be of assistance.

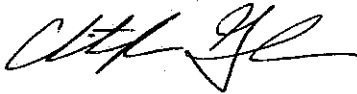
Sincerely,



Jeanne A. Englehart  
President & CEO



Andrew T. Johnston  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
Public Policy & Government Affairs



Christopher Glass  
Public Policy Coordinator  
Public Policy & Government Affairs



Donna Ewigleben  
Chair, Public Policy Subcommittee  
Education & Workforce Development  
Committee